

## Snohomish County Council on Aging

## Healthy Aging Committee Meeting February 8, 2016 10:00 AM—11:30 AM

## **Minutes**

Committee Chair: Chris Freeman

COA Members: Mike Holcomb, Dianne Klem, Chau Nguyen, Tony Porciuncula, and

Linda Whitesell

Contractors: David Tieszen, Program Manager, Hope Options, Everett Housing Authority

Staff: Stefanie Novacek

Chris Freeman, Chair, opened the meeting by asking everyone to introduce themselves and mention something they were grateful for.

**Guest Speaker:** David Tieszen, Program Manager for Hope Options, explained his program. Hope Options serves Snohomish County residents age 60 and older experiencing a housing crisis due to mental health or behavioral issues. The Everett Housing Authority operates the program and contributes 40 Section 8 vouchers and 7 project-based vouchers. All housing vouchers are currently leased. Snohomish County Long Term Care and Aging (LTCA) and the North Sound Mental Health Administration (NSMHA) provide funding.

David offered the following reasons that older adults may experience housing instability:

- Living with a roommate who leaves and the client can no longer afford the unit
- Older adult moves to live with family and it doesn't work out
- Adult children or grandkids are financially exploiting the older adult
- Renting a room in a house and a bank forecloses on the house
- Client fails annual housing inspection for their Section 8 voucher
- Older adult is a hoarder and is evicted by landlord
- Person living on a limited income falls behind on rent and utilities

Hope Options does not diagnose or treat mental illness. Staff negotiate with landlords, help clients apply for subsidized housing, advise clients on budgeting and appropriate behavior, assist clients in searching for housing, and help clients take actions that improve their health and safety such as reducing hoarded items. Staff negotiate with landlords, help clients apply for subsidized housing, advise clients on budgeting and appropriate

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While discussing the Hope Options program, the subject of Baker Heights came up. Baker Heights is a World War II-era housing development owned by the Everett Housing Authority (EHA). EHA is considering selling or demolishing the development, primarily because of the units' age and high cost of renovation. If the units are sold or demolished, every household in Baker Heights will receive a Section 8 voucher. However, private landlords are not required to accept Section 8.

## Other Business

The group reviewed and edited the Healthy Aging Committee's Mission Statement. Staff will make the changes and the group will review and finalize it at a future meeting. It will then be shared with the COA.

The group discussed how they could advocate for the expansion of services to help older adults and people with disabilities improve their physical and mental health. Staff provided examples of COA members advocating for the establishment of a Mental Wellness Committee (which eventually became the Healthy Aging Committee) and passage of the Chemical Dependency Mental Health Treatment Sales Tax. One member suggested looking into the Verdant Healthier Community Initiative which is trying to unite diverse public and private groups to improve the health of Snohomish County residents.

Linda Whitesell proposed forming a subcommittee to develop the theme and content for this year's public forum. The subcommittee could then bring 2 or 3 options to the larger committee in order to make a final decision.

Next meeting: Monday, March 14, 2016 10:00 – 11:30 am

Meeting in Room 6A04, Sixth Floor, Bob Drewel Building

Guest Speaker: Martha Peppones, RD, MSN

Nutrition and Social Services Director Senior Services of Snohomish County